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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002830

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SUNNI ARABS OFFICIALLY WELCOMED INTO TNA  
CONSTITUTION DRAFTING AS DOUBTS PERSIST

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires David M. Satterfield for Reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

11. (U) Deputy Speaker Husayn Shahrستاني announced the expansion of the constitution drafting committee at the July 4 session of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). The announcement amounted to an induction for the 15 Sunni Arabs and one Sabeen nominated from outside the Assembly to join the constitution drafting process as core members. Thirteen other Sunni Arabs nominated as expert advisors are also now free to begin their work. Deputy Constitution Committee Chairman Adnan al-Janabi confirmed the announcement in a press conference he held during a break in the TNA session.

12. (U) The TNA Constitution Drafting Committee and additional representatives will work together as equal members in the "Supreme Commission for the Drafting of the Constitution," according to the announcement. The additional Sunni Arabs and one Sabeen, Subhi Mubarak Mal Allah, are set to meet the original members of the constitution committee on July 5 to get to know one other and receive a report on the work completed to date. The new members will be given the opportunity to re-open items for discussion and distribute themselves among the committee's six committees. Constitution Committee Chairman Humam Hamudi told reporters July 5 that he did not want this new step to prevent the committee from meeting its August 15 deadline. "We hope that the new participation of those who did not participate in the elections will not obstruct the work of the committee or slow it," he said, "so we have arranged a set of intensive meetings to continue the work."

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Comment

13. (C) Yesterday's announcement is a big step forward for Sunni outreach and comes after heavy engagement from the U.S. and British governments. We have seen media reports that two of the 15 new Sunni Arab full committee members, and one of the thirteen Sunni Arab consultants, have withdrawn. Our contacts among the Sunni Arabs tell us that they are trying to ensure all members named on the list stay on the committee.

14. (C) The reservations that held up the inclusion of the 28 Sunnis, however, have by no means vanished. We will have to watch all parties to the process closely to make sure the announcement today is implemented fairly. The de-Ba'athification investigation that delayed the induction has not ended. The Shia and Kurds could well place it like a gun on the table to scare obstructionist Sunni Arab representatives into line. Hamudi has also said that the committee will continue holding open weekly meetings with Sunni Arab leaders and others who are not on the committee but wish to hear updates on its work and contribute their views. The attendees at those meetings will clearly form a pool of alternate members that the committee can pull in should some of the new representatives withdraw in protest. Deputy Constitution Committee Chairman Fuad Ma'asum, deeply suspicious that the new inductees have entered only to withdraw, told Poloff that he was moving forward with plans to crown the constitution drafting process with a "Constitutional Conference" that draws in notables from across Iraqi society to approve the final document with a show of unanimity.

15. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.  
Satterfield